

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Jovita Carranza
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza,

I would like to thank you once again for your tireless efforts to provide aid to American small businesses struggling amid the COVID-19 outbreak. The Small Business Administration (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has been hugely beneficial for small businesses and instrumental in their survival. However, I remain concerned that an important sector in the American economy has inadvertently been made ineligible for this program and I respectfully ask that you and your staff address this shortcoming immediately.

America's rural community is in desperate need of access to capital lending. Based on my conversations with rural lenders in Georgia, many banks remain unable to process and extend PPP funding because they are not currently recognized by SBA as an approved lender. This leaves a great many rural businesses lacking in viable options for relief during this trying time. This issue is further compounded by geographical limitations physically keeping rural businesses from accessing other banks or lending opportunities. For rural businesses able to overcome these barriers, many banks are forced through statute or businesses policy to prioritize existing relationships, once again leaving rural businesses without viable options. Please help our rural community seek much needed relief through the following ways:

1. Extend lending authority to qualified USDA-approved banks. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) dedicates large amounts of time and resources to rural America and is a leading authority on the barriers and obstacles facing rural Americans. USDA has strong partnerships with rural banks and utilizes the expertise of these entities through the USDA Business and Industry Loan Guarantee Program. These USDA-approved lenders work daily with rural businesses to secure reliable access to credit and have a profound understanding of the unique challenges facing rural America.
2. On-ramp new lenders. By increasing the number of participating lenders that small businesses already have an existing relationship with, more small businesses can access the PPP and receive critical payroll support. This includes nonbank lenders to expand the program's coverage to rural businesses that might not have a prior bank relationship.

Thank you again for your work and support throughout this crisis. SBA has been called to the forefront of the Federal Government's response to the COVID-19 outbreak and your continued

support for American workers and businesses is both remarkable and admirable. However, as is always the case when serving Americans, more can and should be done. As my Senate colleagues and I continue to look for ways to address the countless individuals and businesses in need, I respectfully ask that you to extend lending authority to ensure that no American is left behind in our recovery effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kelly Loeffler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Kelly Loeffler